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A BRIEF EXPOSITION  
OF  
ST PAUL'S  
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY THE LATE  
REV. WILLIAM MARSH, D.D.,  
RECTOR OF BEDDINGTON, HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER.

WITH A PREFACE, BY HIS DAUGHTER, THE AUTHOR OF THE  
"MEMORIALS OF CAPTAIN HEDLEY VICARS."

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## PREFACE.

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THIS brief exposition of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans was commenced by my beloved and revered father, during a lingering illness, towards the close of the year 1862.

His mind had for a long time dwelt much on this Epistle; and as the attacks from which he suffered increased in severity and danger, his anxiety not to leave this little work unfinished increased also.

Most touching was it to see him, during the intervals of comparative ease, exerting himself to dictate a few sentences at a time—for his *last* opportunity of spreading through the press the knowledge he loved so well, of the gospel of the grace of God. Several times he pursued his labour, which to him seemed only a mental recreation, until palpitation of the heart put an end to it for the time; and so earnest



was his interest in this work, that his medical attendant suggested his life might be prolonged by the energy of his desire for its completion.

It was ever one of the distinguishing features of his mind, alike intense in its tranquillity and tranquil in its intensity, to desire to accomplish, at all hazards to himself, any work which he undertook in order to promote the interests of the kingdom of Christ. It was this "spirit of a man sustaining his infirmity" which constrained him, during a temporary rally in the course of that illness, to attempt to resume his habit of preaching the afternoon sermon on Sunday. This he did with an energy and power which astonished his hearers, and caused a young officer in the army, who was acquainted with the risk of life which he thus incurred, to exclaim as he left the church, "Well, I never saw such pluck! That old veteran would march up to the cannon's mouth, at the order of *his* Commander-in-chief, without giving a thought to danger!"

But the effort, in the midst of unconquered illness, was too great; and after one more repetition of it, a return of those attacks of the heart ensued, and he was again laid by, to enter his pulpit no more;

although to the last he continued to give Scriptural addresses from his sick-bed, or his wheel-chair in the Rectory or its grounds, where on different occasions from two hundred to five hundred persons assembled to hear him.

Towards the close of the first week in January 1863, his illness alarmingly increased. From eight o'clock on Monday evening of the second week, until noon on the following day, his family, with his doctor, watched around his bed, believing that each hour would be his last. It was the week which had been set apart by many Christians, throughout the world, for special prayer. In London, amongst other places opened for a similar purpose, a daily prayer-meeting was held at Freemasons' Hall. To the chairman of this assembly a note was forwarded from Dr Marsh's family, to ask the "Christians gathered together there to plead with God that, *if* it would best promote His glory, and the good of His Church, that lovely and beloved life might yet be spared for a season, with a measure of restoration to health."

This petition was read, and one who was present at the time wrote, "Your request seemed to find a

response in almost every heart there. The 'Amen' from countless voices would have borne up your fainting spirit, had you heard it."

From that hour he began to revive. "Women received their dead raised to life again." And although it was a return from the very gate of Heaven, and from the rapture of having had glimpses of the glory within, making "his face as it were the face of an angel," yet was he thankfully content to linger on earth for a season, as soon as he knew that it was the will of his Lord.

"It will be delightful," he said, "to serve my Master and Saviour here a little longer, and to make my beloved ones happy again;" adding in his own cheerful tone, and with the sweet sunshine of his playful smile, "And now I can finish my Romans!"

It *was* finished, early in the summer of that year; but was kept beside him for occasional enriching with some fresh thought or quotation. He never wearied of looking over it, from time to time; having it locked up for two or three months, and then taken out again, that he might read it, improve it, and, above all, pray for great blessing to accompany it.

The sunlight glow of the cloudless summer of this

year seemed to be reflected about him. Never had we seen his face so brilliant in colouring and expression,—never had the charm of his conversation been more flowing and sparkling,—never had his heart of love so poured forth its heavenly warmth and tenderness. Did he foreknow the treasure he was laying up for us—of looks and tones and words and ways—almost too lovely for earth? It may be so. It may be, also, that there mingled a solemn yet joyful presentiment that it was his *last* anniversary, with the simplicity of child-like gladness with which he looked forward to his ninetieth birthday, and arranged the programme of the gathering of his parishioners of all classes for that day—and for a conference on the day before, of clergy and laity, with reference to the subject of the Second Advent of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.\* For half a century this glorious anticipation had occupied his thoughts, and had been the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and he had bestowed much time and study upon books connected with the subject, and especially upon the diligent search of the prophetical part of the Word of God.

\* Forty-three years ago, he published his "Plain Thoughts on Prophecy."

The brief but faithful record of the words which he spoke on those two days has been already published.\* None who heard will easily forget that clear testimony to the blessedness of resting on the finished work of Christ, and of looking for His coming glory; nor the sudden burst of sacred song with which he closed his first address—nor the pouring out of his soul in prayer.

Thus ended the sixty-six years of his public ministry in the gospel of Christ.

Yet there remained one more solemn pulpit for him to enter—his deathbed. And not even his long life of faith upon the Son of God could bear witness with such force to the nearness and all-sufficiency of a Saviour. Those who entered that chamber of death felt it was holy ground—knew there was a Presence there, fulfilling the promise, “When thou passest through the waters, I WILL BE WITH THEE.”

A year and a half earlier, he had exclaimed, after quoting the lines,—

“But timorous mortals start and shrink  
To cross that narrow sea,”

“*Why should they?* They may go over Jordan dry-

\* “The Last Birthday of the Rev. W. Marsh, D.D.” By M. C. J. T.

shod!" And truly; as his own feet touched the stream, its waters ebbed away at the command of Him who can say to waves and wind, "Peace, be still,"—and "there is a great calm."

With smiles of heavenly sweetness, he extended his hand to each relative, and friend, and servant, who had gathered together in his room, and lifted up his eyes in silent blessing. Afterwards, in the same manner of dignified composure, with his own hand he closed his eyes, thus withdrawing himself from all earthly objects, that he might "see JESUS only." Then, those pale features shone with radiant brightness, blending in their expression a tender awe with "joy unspeakable and full of glory," as he gently resigned his spirit into the keeping of his Saviour.

Such was his voiceless farewell to the friends around him.

His farewell words to a wider circle are now sent forth, with fervent prayer that, by the power of the Holy Ghost, they may be used to "stablish, strengthen, settle" many a waverer—in the "simplicity which is in Christ;" and to build up the saints of God "in their most holy faith."

\* \* \* \*

"So we went slowly down  
To the river-side,  
Till we stood in the heavy shadows  
By the wild black tide.

We could hear that the Lord was speaking  
Deep words of grace,  
We could see their bless'd reflection  
Upon our father's face.

' Farewell !—I cannot fear,  
Do *you* not see His grace ?'  
And even as he spoke he turn'd  
Again to the Master's face.

So they two went closer down  
To the river-side,  
And stood in the heavy shadows  
By the black wild tide.

But when the feet of the Lord  
Were come to the waters dim,  
They rose to stand, on either hand,  
And left a path for Him.

So they two pass'd over quickly  
Towards the goal,  
But the wistful longing gaze  
Of the parting soul

Grew only more rapt and joyful  
As he held the Master's hand ;  
We think, or ever he was aware,  
They were come to the Holy Land."

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# CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
PREFACE, . . . . .	iii
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	1
CHAPTER I.	
The Condition of the Gentiles, . . . . .	7
CHAPTER II.	
The Condition of the Jews, . . . . .	13
CHAPTER III.	
Justification by Faith, . . . . .	19
CHAPTER IV.	
Abraham and David justified by Faith, . . . . .	25
CHAPTER V.	
The Believer's Privileges, . . . . .	31
CHAPTER VI.	
The Believer's Character and Conduct, . . . . .	35



	PAGE
CHAPTER VII.	
The Believer's Conflict, . . . . .	39
CHAPTER VIII.	
The Believer's Triumph, . . . . .	45
CHAPTER IX.	
The Righteous Rejection of the Jews, . . . . .	53
CHAPTER X.	
The Merciful Vocation of the Gentiles, . . . . .	61
CHAPTER XI.	
The Re-engrafting of the Jews, and the Diffusion of True Religion, . . . . .	65
CHAPTER XII.	
The Believer's Reasonable Service, . . . . .	71
CHAPTER XIII.	
The Believer's Public Duties and Personal Holiness, . . . . .	77
CHAPTER XIV.	
The Duty of Mutual Forbearance, . . . . .	85
CHAPTER XV.	
Forbearance Enforced by the Example of Christ, . . . . .	91
CHAPTER XVI.	
The Salutations, Prayers, and Praises of an Apostle, . . . . .	97

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE Christian Church of Rome, though not in the first instance planted by St Paul, was yet diligently watered by him, and produced abundant fruit.

The apostle's great object in addressing an epistle to the members of this Church, was to establish them in the faith of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that they might possess peace by believing in the doctrines of the gospel, and likewise adorn it by a practical attention to its precepts.

The whole epistle is remarkably systematic, and constitutes in itself a body of divinity.

To show forth its systematic form, I shall first call the reader's attention to the principal feature of each chapter.

The apostle having assigned as his reason for not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that be-

lieveth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," proceeds to prove in the

#### FIRST CHAPTER,

That the Gentiles were all under sin.

#### SECOND CHAPTER.

That the Jews, also, were all under sin.

#### THIRD CHAPTER.

That both one and the other could only be justified freely by faith, through the redemption which is in Christ.

#### FOURTH CHAPTER.

That Abraham, under the Patriarchal dispensation, and David, under the Levitical dispensation, were thus justified; as *we* also shall be if we have the same faith.

#### FIFTH CHAPTER.

The privileges and consequent experience of the believer in this gospel, as connected with the contrast between Adam and Christ.

#### SIXTH CHAPTER.

His Character, as it is formed, and his Conduct, as it should be influenced, by its principles.

## SEVENTH CHAPTER.

## His Conflict.

Notwithstanding the advantage of being detached from the Mosaic Law, and united to the faith of Christ, yet, in proportion as he became acquainted with the spirituality of the moral law, and conscious of indwelling sin, he would experience a great conflict, and never could arrive at peace, or attain a dominion over sin, but through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 24 and 25.

## EIGHTH CHAPTER.

## His Triumph.

This ends the *Doctrinal* part of the epistle.

## NINTH CHAPTER.

The righteous rejection of the Jews.

## TENTH CHAPTER.

The merciful vocation of the Gentiles.

## ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The re-ingrafting of the Jews, and the diffusion of true religion throughout the world.

This ends the *Prophetical* part of the epistle.

## TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The mercies of God, as shown in the plan of redemption, should constrain believers to devotedness of heart and life to Him. This would be evidenced by a practical attention to their duties in their different stations, which indeed would be but a "reasonable service."

## THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Patriotic duty in submission to magistrates, and the superior authorities in general.

These duties are taught by the moral law of love to our neighbour, which is binding still under the Christian dispensation, for, although penitent believers in the gospel are delivered from condemnation by it, and have nothing to do with it as a covenant of works, yet the *law of love* can never be set aside.

## FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The duty of mutual forbearance between Jewish and Gentile believers; as the former would retain some national ceremonies, from the observance of which the Gentile believers would be free.

## FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

This spirit of forbearance still insisted upon, and

enforced by the example of Christ, who had received both Jews and Gentiles; thus, the God of peace would be with them all.

This ends the *Practical* part of the epistle.

#### SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

This last chapter contains the salutations of the apostle to various Christians, and the commendations of certain individuals who had rendered special service to the Christian cause, concluding with cautions against divisions of heart, and with the blessed prospect of the enemy of truth and love being finally overcome.

St Paul entertained the hope that God would establish them according to this gospel, which was to be made known to all the nations for the obedience of faith. Therefore, for such a gospel and its benign effects and blessed hopes, "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen."



# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

## CHAPTER I.

“ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name; among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to



the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them : for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse : because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves : who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections : for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature : and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another ; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient : being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity ; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful : who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CONDITION OF THE GENTILES.

As to the writer of this epistle, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,"—it is impossible to conceive a person more qualified to preach that gospel than he was, even from his former enmity to it, and now from his deep gratitude for his conversion; because that in him, the chief of sinners, "Jesus Christ had shown forth all long-suffering, as a pattern (or type) to them that should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

In another place he shows the nature of his commission to the Gentiles, namely, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that were sanctified by faith in Christ."

Such was the gospel of God foretold by the prophets; and such was the gospel preached by St Paul

concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, who had proved Himself to be the Son of God, and the promised Saviour, by His resurrection from the dead.

Greatly indeed mankind needed such glad tidings ; for how clearly the Scriptures show the depraved and miserable state of human nature ! It is quite a mistake to suppose that the Greeks or the Romans were ever *civilised*, in the full meaning of the phrase. They were only *polished*.

Even their philosophers, (lovers of wisdom, as they were called,) who knew better, countenanced the idolatry and wickedness of the people. The apostle therefore labours, throughout this chapter, to show the absolute necessity of the gospel of Christ for Greece and Rome, as well as for the more ignorant and savage of mankind ; since, however polished these nations might be, they were yet the slaves of senseless idolatry and abominable wickedness. He also shows the desperate condition of "men who hold the truth," which they know from the works of creation, "in unrighteousness ;" darkening it, and "changing it into a lie," as was the case with the philosophers in general ; he then sets forth the justice of God in leaving them to the natural hardness and wickedness of their hearts, "treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judg-

ment of God." But when the gospel came and showed the way plainly in which God could account men righteous, by faith in Christ as our righteousness, and they received it by faith, it changed their character, because it delivered them from the guilt and present dominion of sin, as well as from liability to future punishment; and thus the gospel was proved to be "the power of God unto salvation."

It appears, therefore, that neither human science nor learning, nor mere mental cultivation of any kind, or in any degree, can ever produce *true* civilisation. Christianity alone has this power; hence the noble confession of the apostle, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

But let us notice how thankful the apostle was for those who had clean escaped from them that lived in error, and how desirous he was to establish them in the faith; and no marvel,—“For there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” God is glorified, and man is saved. But whether for the conversion of sinners, or edification of believers, we see in the apostle’s example the absolute importance of prayer, (verse 9.) Paul might plant, or Apollos water, but God only could give the increase.

Speaking from the words in the 16th verse of this chapter, Archbishop Longley says,—“ They are in fact the text, therein unfolded throughout the whole tenor of its instruction. They are the opening words of that noble argument in behalf of the doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of Jesus, which has been the stay and support of the believer throughout all ages of the Church. They are the starting point from which the apostle launches out into the full discussion of those great truths which must convict all men of sin, and should convince them of the need of a Saviour. They are the preface to that volume which, if every other record of St Paul’s writings had perished, would alone have been sufficient to have instructed the world in the whole counsel of God for the redemption of fallen man.”

The power of God has evidently accompanied this gospel, inasmuch as it has prevailed against the power of princes, the craft of priests, the wisdom of philosophers, and the prejudices of the people; and indeed, it is the only power which, being received by faith into the heart, delivers human nature from the guilt and the dominion of sin.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER II.

“ Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean

while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preacheest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God! For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CONDITION OF THE JEWS.

THE object of the apostle in this chapter is to prove that, even where there was a direct revelation from Heaven, and men might have learned to discern things which differ, and to approve those which were excellent, instead of approving the good, they would still "the ill pursue."

This was the case with the Jewish nation, as shown by Josephus, their own historian. Hence, while they despised the Gentiles as blind and ignorant, and mere babes, they stood as much in need of the gospel of Christ as did the Gentiles themselves.

The apostle advances with great skill, and insinuates himself by degrees into the Jew's conscience, for their self-confidence was great, and their prejudices were very strong.

By this gospel they might at length learn the true nature and design of the Mosaic institutions, and thus become faithful children of Abraham. Alas! that men should despise the riches of God's goodness, and



forbearance, and long-suffering, which ought rather to lead them to repentance.

It is important not to overlook this expression, "the *goodness* of God *leadeth* thee to repentance," for terrors may *drive* us to fear, but it is goodness which leads us to sorrow for, and to forsake sin, especially *that* goodness of God which is afterwards more fully discussed in this epistle, and was so wonderfully manifested in the scheme of redemption. There is also something peculiarly tender in the expression "leadeth," suggesting the gentle hand of a father leading us from a dangerous path, to one in which perfect safety, true beauties, and real happiness are to be found.

What a delightful view these words give us of the Divine character. But what an awful view the context gives us of the human character even when under great advantages.

It is worthy of remark, in an epistle so systematically doctrinal, and establishing beyond a doubt that man, as a sinner, can only be justified exclusively by faith, in the Saviour, that it should be no less distinctly stated, that in the day of judgment God will render to every man according to his works, because conduct, as the expression of character, will show the state of man's heart.

The Christian religion, therefore, is as much opposed to the system of the Antinomian professor, as it is to that of the self-righteous Pharisee, but the false guides among the Jews had taught them that no Israelite would fall short of future happiness unless he were guilty of apostacy, idolatry, and some other enormous crimes.

We are also reminded by the judgment the Jews formed of the Gentiles, of our Lord's saying, "Judge not that ye be not judged." A hasty and uncharitable judgment is a great sin in the sight of God.

Though this epistle is designed to reveal systematically the doctrines of Christianity, "the deep things of God;" the genuine effects of true faith on the character of the believer are also plainly declared, and the Divine Being is seen as a merciful sovereign and a righteous judge. The rule of God's future judgment is clearly stated in verses 6-11. Let us keep this in view, that God will render to every man according to his deeds. The Jew boasted of being in possession of truth, but he held it in mere form, or in ungodliness. He imprisoned it in self-righteousness, and therefore he stood as much in need of a Saviour as the ignorant and idolatrous Gentile. Indeed, such Gentiles as followed reason and conscience, would be very preferable characters to those Jews who, boasting

of their descent from Abraham, were not followers of his faith, nor practically regarded the law they possessed. Profession without practice will only increase condemnation. True religion must be in the heart, and shew itself in the life, and not in mere profession or attention to ceremonies; whose praise may not be of man, but, (oh, how infinitely valuable) of God, who searcheth the heart. Let this teach us to pray continually, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER III.

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are sweet to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:

that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

## CHAPTER III.

### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

WE notice in this chapter the great advantage of the Jew in having the Oracles of God. Even of the portion David possessed, he could say, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (See Ps. xix.)

The Holy Spirit employs the Scriptures for these ends; therefore, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

St Paul, in this chapter, is answering an objector. The unbelief of the Jews would not make the true faith of God of none effect, or prevent the fulfilment of His Word, and every opposer of Divine revelation, as well as every one who should pervert the right use of it, would be found at the last to be a liar.

The objector wished to extenuate sin, but he will find "when God shall judge the world," that there is no excuse for it.

What a humiliating view this chapter gives us of the fallen state of man, until renewed by Divine grace. A proper knowledge of ourselves, and of the spirituality of the law, whose spirituality extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart, would indeed shew us our need of that free justification of which the apostle is about to treat.

And what an encouraging and glorious view is given us of the Divine method of our justification by faith in Christ, inasmuch as the moral government of God is maintained, and He can be just, and yet the justifier of the guilty who believe in Jesus. Here we see the "just God and the Saviour."

It is therefore with reference to our *justification by "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe,"* that the deeds of the law are excluded. In after parts of this epistle it will be shewn, that this very faith supplies the strongest obligation to good works.

The righteousness of God, so often mentioned, is the righteousness which in His love He has provided, and which the Divine Redeemer wrought out by His obedience unto death. "He shall make an end of

sin, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness," says the prophet Daniel. (Dan. ix., 24.)

It is this which at once magnifies the law, and manifests the holiness and justice of God.

It is impossible for man to be justified by the law ; and the very method of justification by faith actually establishes the law, a perfect obedience to which can alone merit heaven, and that is to be found only in the perfect obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being justified freely, shews that there was no human merit ; and being justified by His grace, shews that the motive in God was His own free mercy.

How dangerous to neglect so great salvation !

Dying in such a state, man is unjustified, unsanctified, and unsaved. The Lord grant us faith in this free salvation, even the " faith which worketh by love."





## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER IV.

“ What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are

of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect : because the law worketh wrath : for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb : he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

## CHAPTER IV.

### ABRAHAM AND DAVID JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.

IN endeavouring to convince the Jews of the truth of Christianity, it is of the utmost importance to prove to them that it is not a *new* religion. St Paul has been shewing that fallen man can only be justified by faith in the Saviour, and here he expressly declares that Abraham, under the Patriarchal dispensation, was so justified, for man has nothing in which he can glory before God; and by the law "there is none righteous, no not one." "Therefore to him that worketh not," that is for justification, "but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

As a proof that St James holds no other doctrine when he says that Abraham was justified by works, (he is speaking of the difference between a dead faith and a living faith), we find St Paul actually referring to the case of the same individual, and saying that Abraham was justified by faith before God some forty

years previously to the performance of the work to which St James refers as an evidence of the reality of his faith. St James's argument, therefore, is that for a man merely to say he has faith, does not prove it; for can it be a true faith, if it produces no fruit?

The 11th and 12th Articles of the Church of England make this point perfectly clear.

"We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

"Albeit that good works, which are fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's judgment: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God, in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruits."

Such was Abraham's religion.

The apostle, to illustrate his subject, refers to two great favourites of the Jewish nation; the patriarch Abraham and king David, (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.)

As in the case of Abraham, he brought forward the truth of the imputation of righteousness, so in the

case of David, the non-imputation of sin, intentionally leaving out the last sentence in the second verse ; and thus shews that every difficulty is removed out of the way which could hinder the justification of believing sinners.

Where could we see wisdom more profound, justice more awful, or mercy more triumphant, than in this way of acceptance with God ?

But we cannot leave this chapter without particularly noticing that the covenant of grace, revealed to Abraham, included the Gentiles as well as the Jews ; thus Abraham is called a father of "many nations." One great excellency of Abraham's faith was the persuasion "that what God had promised He was able also to perform." Thus :—

" Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And owns the work begun ;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And says, It shall be done ! "

But we must not forget that "it was not written, for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER V.

“ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and



the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGES.

WE have here some of the happy fruits of faith, "peace with God," "the hope of glory," and "patience in tribulation," (especially as realising that it comes from Him who loves us;) and the great peculiarity of that love, it being love towards us while we were yet sinners; and then the highest possible attainment,—"joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" may have reference to the perfect holiness and happiness, and the splendour of that future state, reflecting as it were the glory of God. There is a sure foundation for this hope, for as God hath accepted the atonement, so believers have received, by faith, the reconciliation, through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "atonement" is the same, except in form, as the word "reconciled" in the preceding verse.

Then the chapter closes with a most glorious and remarkable contrast between the First and the Second Adam, to the infinite advantage and pre-eminence of the latter.

However great the misery derived through the First Adam, it is more than abundantly compensated by the benefits derived through the Second Adam. Sin, indeed, had abounded, through the First, as the law plainly showed; but that grace did much more abound through the Second, as is clearly revealed in the gospel, which brings the glad tidings that "grace reigns over sin and death unto eternal life, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Is it possible to read this chapter and not see that Christianity is the source of the best and truest happiness in time, and a sure foundation of perfect happiness in eternity?

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

If we walk not in her ways, and pursue not her paths, how can we expect peace? It is said of those who pursue another course, "There is no peace to the wicked." There may be diversion, amusement, thoughtlessness, or entire want of feeling, but nothing answering to *peace*, in the full meaning of the word.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER VI.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to

obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BELIEVER'S CHARACTER AND CONDUCT.

GREAT is the mistake of supposing that the doctrine of justification by faith is unfavourable to morality ; on the contrary, it provides the strongest motives to the performance of every good work.

In the law there is no promise of pardon or strength ; in the gospel there is the promise of both.

When baptized into the profession of the Christian faith, we are baptized into the faith of the Saviour's death, by which Satan was overcome, and a provision made both for pardon and grace. It is in this way (not by the mere act of baptism, but by the faith professed at that time) that men die to sin, and rise again to a holy life, (see verse 5 ;) and such believers will for ever live with Christ. In the present life, sin shall not have dominion over them, because they are "not under the law, but under grace."

St Paul clearly saw that the doctrine of grace might be abused, and therefore, in this chapter, enters so striking a protest against that abuse.

The expression, "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin," simply means, "whereas ye were," or "though ye were;" but they had been cast into the mould of the gospel, and would henceforth exhibit its beautiful features. Such is the true figure in the words, "form of doctrine whereto ye were delivered," (see marginal reading.)

It is worthy of notice that sin is unprofitable, both as to the past, the present, and the future, (see verse 21 ;) while the service of God, on the contrary, "hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Nevertheless, the true believer, knowing the imperfections which attend his best services, does not for a moment rely upon them; but knowing himself as judged by the law to be a sinner, and rejecting the false idea of a sincere, though imperfect, obedience being meritorious, he has no hope of eternal life, but as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word *wages* may have been taken from the pension given to the Roman soldiers as a reward for stipulated service. But we have no *meritorious* services to offer, and therefore must be deeply thankful that eternal life is a gift.

"Of all that wisdom teaches, this the drift,—  
That man is dead in sin, and life's a gift."

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER VII.

“ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth : but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress : but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then ? Is the law sin ? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law : for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.



Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BELIEVER'S CONFLICT.

It was no easy matter to convince the converted Jews that the gospel of Christ delivered them from the expensive and burdensome rites of the Levitical law. But the first six verses of this chapter are intended to show that they were as much delivered from it, as a woman is delivered from the authority of her husband when he is dead.

Moreover, (while unacquainted with the gospel,) the moral law, though holy, just, and good in itself, did not lead our fallen nature to holiness and righteousness. In a striking manner the apostle exhibits the state of a man ignorant of the law, and therefore self-confident, (see ver. 9 ;) then of a man acquainted with the law, and therefore self-condemned ; for he now saw that the law was spiritual, extending even to the thoughts and intents of the heart. "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." We are not to suppose that St Paul had

been living at any time in any way that would disgrace the Christian profession, but he is comparing himself with the perfection which the law requires.

The expression, "In me, that is, *in my flesh*, dwelleth no good thing," is a key to the secret of this conflict.

In the 5th chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and in the 17th verse, he refers to the same subject:—

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Although believers could not do all the good their new nature dictated, they would be restrained from acting out the dictates of their fallen nature, from which we learn the extreme importance of praying for, and relying on, the aid of the Holy Spirit.

We have already referred to the apostle's experience, both when ignorant of the law and after he had become acquainted with it. We may now notice his acquaintance with the gospel, as delivering him from condemnation, and leading him "to delight in the law after the inward man." This can scarcely be said of an unconverted person, and for this deliverance and first hope he "thanks God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The expression in the 24th verse, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" is thought to refer to that very cruel punishment of criminals, when a dead man was fastened to the living one, which caused him to die a lingering and suffering death; and at the same time it shows the apostle's great abhorrence of sin. Some have supposed that the apostle is referring in this passage to a past rather than to a present experience, because he himself says in the next chapter, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." But it is evident that his heaven-taught view of the spirituality of the law led him to use the strong expressions recorded in this chapter, and the words, "I myself," in the 25th verse, must mean the apostle himself.

We cannot close this chapter without pointing to the triumph with which the next begins, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER VIII.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace : because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ : if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of

this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH.

A POOR woman said of this portion, "It is a blessed chapter; it begins with 'no condemnation,' and it ends with 'no separation.'" She was one of those happy poor, described by St James as "rich in faith;" and also described by the poet Cowper in the following beautiful lines, in which he contrasts the infidel Voltaire with a Christian cottager:—

"Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;  
And in that Charter reads, with sparkling eyes,  
Her title to a mansion in the skies."

We have called this chapter the Triumph. It is so full of privileges that it would require a book fully to discuss each verse; but a few remarks only can be made here.

After describing, in the preceding part of his Epistle, the guilty, sinful, and helpless state of man, St Paul shows in this chapter the blessedness conferred by the gospel of Christ. Delivered from sin's desert by the



merit and atonement of the Saviour, and secured in his happy state by the constant intercession of the same Saviour, his great High Priest, all the other privileges follow to the believer. Earnestly should we pray that the experience of the 14th verse may be ours, that we may be "led by the Spirit of God." That Holy Spirit leads to self-knowledge, and humility; to the knowledge of Christ, and confidence; to the knowledge of duty, and the faithful discharge of it; and to the knowledge of that love of God which is from everlasting to everlasting. Thus led, we shall give to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all praise and glory for ever and ever. Being set free from the dominion of sin, (ver. 2,) and endued with the spirit of love, the believer is adopted into the family of Heaven, and may cry, "Abba, Father," (ver. 15;) and the Spirit bears witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God,\* (ver. 16;) all things work together for his good, (ver. 28;) and, though the body is dead because of sin, and he groans for final deliverance, yet the Spirit helps his infirmities, and may be said to intercede for him

\* This assurance of sonship is the blessed privilege of all believers under the gospel, and is called in other places being sealed by the Spirit. Each one should earnestly seek this special indwelling of the Holy Ghost; at the same time every penitent believer loves the law, the character, and the government of God; and all this is *evidence* that he is a child of God, but not the *ground* of his confidence.

within, by exciting desires, and suggesting prayer, as the Redeemer is said to plead without, in the Holy of Holies.

No trials that the people of Christ may endure in His service can separate His love from them, for they are precious jewels in His sight, and such trials do but make them more dear to Him ; whilst they, believing His love to them, and the sufferings He endured for their sakes, will be preserved from apostasy. Thus Polycarp, when brought before the tribunal of the heathen proconsul, and urged by him to save his life, saying, " Swear, and I will release thee,—reproach Christ;" received grace and strength to reply, " Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me ; and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me ;"—and was faithful unto death, blessing God that he had been accounted worthy to receive his portion in the number of the martyrs.

So great will be the triumph, that neither death, nor life, nor evil angels, nor persecuting principalities, nor powers on earth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height of prosperity, nor depth of adversity, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ! " I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee,"

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(Jer. xxxi. 3.) "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," (Heb. xiii. 5.)

The form of the apostle's challenge, as to all enemies, dangers, and difficulties, (ver. 33,) is worthy of particular notice; and some read it thus, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God, that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ, that died?"

And all is traced to the eternal purpose, love, and mercy of God, as flowing freely, and in harmony with all the Divine attributes, through Jesus Christ our Lord, as the appointed channel.\*

I have reserved, for a few concluding thoughts on this chapter, that remarkable parenthesis (from ver. 18-23,) "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." See in this St Paul shows his skill in computation, by comparing future joys with present sufferings.

He shows that the whole creation has suffered by

\* But we must not overlook the emphatic words, "Yea, rather who is risen again." The release of the surety from prison shows that the debt is paid.

How applicable to our Lord, in this case, are the words of Judah to Jacob, when promising to restore Benjamin to him! "I will be surety for him; at my hand shalt thou require him. If I bring him not to thee and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever."

the sin of man, but that a period will come when deliverance shall be granted.

By a figure of speech, creation is represented as with outstretched neck looking for it. This will be at the period of the victory of the universal Church, when the sons of God shall be manifested who have been overlooked or misrepresented here, and a glory revealed in them infinitely surpassing any present trials, and their glorious liberty shall be obtained. They have liberty of access to the throne of grace now, but then they will have access to the throne of glory. This will be at the resurrection of the body. How different their experience then from the bigoted, malignant, and persecuting treatment they had met with in the world !

There appears to be an allusion in this passage to the ancient practice of the Romans in the adoption of children, which was to adopt them first in private, and then in the forum publicly. And so with the believer ; there is a private adoption in time, by faith in the Redeemer, and a public one at the great resurrection morning, called here " the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

NOTE.—If any soul is distressed by the subject of election, as stated here and in the following chapter, let him turn the subject into prayer, as David does :—

“Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance,” (Ps. cvi. 4, 5.) Persevering in prayer, he shall be delivered from all his doubts.

The 17th Article of the Church of England guards against the abuse of this doctrine, either in the way of despondency or presumption. We do well to recollect that the full *assurance of faith* is a bounden duty, because we have no right to distrust the Word of God, and in 1 John v. 10, 11 it is written, “He that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

But the *assurance of hope* is not always a duty, but is a privilege which should be diligently sought. We may fall short of *this* assurance from indistinct views of the gospel plan of salvation, or by grieving the Holy Spirit by some indulged sin in heart or life, or even from the condition of our nervous system producing a morbid and dejected state of mind. Yet we do well to pray constantly that we “may *abound in hope* through the power of the Holy Ghost,” for it is a most animating and purifying principle.

We may learn from this epistle this great truth,—that the Scriptures never lose sight of the sovereignty of God when bringing forward the responsibility of man, or the responsibility of man when maintaining the sovereignty of God.

The strongest objections to the authority of Scripture will be found to be on account of the humiliating tendency of its doctrines, and the holy nature of its precepts.

These eight chapters contain the DOCTRINAL part of the epistle.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER IX.

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called; that is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God

that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. *Esaias* also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as *Esaias* said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RIGHTEOUS REJECTION OF THE JEWS.

WHEN Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ, the Jews thought he would lose all regard for them ; but on the contrary, though he pointed out their danger in rejecting the Saviour, he could make a solemn appeal to Heaven, that he had " great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" on their account, and that he would even be willing to be a great sufferer if he might thereby benefit them.

He had known what it was to be an unbeliever himself, and on this ground his feelings for them were very deep. The expression, " I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ," certainly means, anathema, an outcast from Christ. Some think it might be read thus in a parenthesis, " I have continual sorrow in my heart, (for *I did* wish that myself were accursed from Christ,) for my brethren," &c., (referring to his former state of unbelief.)



He then shows his high respect for the nation, by enumerating their peculiar privileges :—

Adopted by God, when the world was lying in idolatry :

Accompanied by the symbol of God's presence, the cloud of glory :

To whom was made known the Covenant revealed to Abraham, and their own National Covenant ; the republication of the Moral Law ; and, added to this, the Ceremonial Law, to direct their services and to keep them separate from the surrounding idolatrous nations, and to be typical of the redemption which Christ was to accomplish ;—together with exceeding great promises :

Who were also the descendants of the patriarchal fathers ; but, above all, from whom, as concerning the flesh, Messiah himself came, who, in His Divine nature, is “ over all, God blessed for ever,” to which the apostle adds his hearty “ Amen,” as does every real Christian.

The character of God, as revealed in Scripture, is that of a *merciful Sovereign*, and a *righteous Judge*. His acts of sovereignty are therefore acts of mercy ; for instance, “ you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

But His punishments, properly speaking, are not

acts of mere sovereignty ; but righteous judgments on sin. Though he saves without merit to deserve it, He never punishes without sin to deserve it.

We must therefore notice from this chapter, that the agents in fitting for glory, and fitting for wrath, are *not* the same. God, in His sovereign mercy, has fitted the vessels for glory, but endures with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted, not by Him, but, as the close of this chapter proves, in fact fitted by themselves for destruction, by a rejection of His offer of mercy in Christ.

With regard to the expression at the commencement of the 22d verse, we must remember that God is never *willing* to show His wrath against anything except sin. In this very passage we are told that "He endured with much longsuffering, or longbearing, the vessels of wrath *fitted* for destruction." He would not destroy the nation of the Amalekites, because "the iniquity thereof was not yet full." Again, He Himself asserts by the mouth of His prophet, (Ezek. xviii. 23,) "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live."

A scriptural view of the character of God is of great importance, (Job xxii. 21.)

The Jews had some zeal for religion, but they re-

jected God's method of salvation. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone."

No metaphor indeed could describe more clearly our utter and exclusive dependence upon God, than that of the potter and the clay; yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, His mercy is freely bestowed, and all who seek, according to the gospel, shall find.

The word "hated" (ver. 13) is not unfrequently used comparatively to signify less favoured. If we refer to the prophet whom St Paul quotes, we shall find that it was not Esau personally, with reference to his eternal state, but Esau with reference to his posterity, that is there alluded to, "Whose mountains and heritage would be laid waste," (Mal. i. 3.) Where are Esau's descendants to be found now? But the posterity of Jacob remains. -

I hope these thoughts may save the reader from drawing any inference from this chapter that would discourage him from seeking after God.

It appears to be the object of the apostle to humble the boastful self-righteous Jew, but not to discourage

either Jew or Gentile, who would gladly accept salvation as a free gift through Jesus Christ.

On reading this chapter the question will arise, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" To which the answer is provided, "God forbid:" and the whole testimony of Scripture shows that "He is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He," (Deut. xxxii 4.)

Moreover, this epistle opens with the assertion that there will be a righteous judgment of God, when equity as well as justice will be manifested.

"Who will render to every man," says the apostle, "according to his deeds." "For there is no respect of persons with God." If it were not a judgment according to equity and justice, "How then could God *judge* the world?"

Dispensations, which at present seem to us strange, will appear in a future state to be perfectly plain, and worthy of the character of God. Indeed, we now see, that such a man as Pharaoh, by acting merely after the dictates of his own heart, may yet bring honour to God by His righteous judgments upon him.

Look at the conduct and character and persecuting spirit of Pharaoh. No sooner was a judgment withdrawn than he hardened himself again. It was

righteous therefore in God thus to leave him to take his own course till his final judgment came, which would glorify God and deliver His people Israel.

Therefore, while this chapter exhibits the sovereignty of God in showing mercy, it also manifests His righteous judgments in the national rejection of the Jews, though to that there will be a period. Oh ! there will be a wonderful display at the last of the justice, mercy, and equity of God, and it will call forth the hallelujahs of the universe !

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER X.

“ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach

except they be sent ? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things ! But they have not all obeyed the gospel ; for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report ? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard ? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know ? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MERCIFUL VOCATION OF THE GENTILES.

IN the opening verses of this chapter the apostle still carries on the same subject, namely, the rejection of the Jews for resisting God's method of constituting sinful man righteous:—"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." St Paul, nevertheless, shows his continued love for his own people, inasmuch as his heart's desire and prayer for them was, that they might be saved.

It is impossible to read the remainder of this chapter without seeing the importance of the preaching of the gospel, as a specially appointed means of making known God's salvation to sinful man, and therefore without also feeling the conviction that it is the bounden duty of a Christian Church to send forth the heralds of mercy, according to her opportunities and ability, as far as

"Winds can waft, or waters roll."



There is something peculiarly pleasing in the picture presented to us in the 10th verse—the distant view, upon the mountains, of the ambassador of peace approaching to proclaim “the glad tidings” of the gospel. Thus when the Greeks received the news of their freedom, they for a long time shouted aloud respecting the ambassador who had brought the good news, “A saviour! a saviour!”

As far as the civilised part of the world was concerned, the gospel had, even at that time, made wonderful progress. And how plain the way of peace both for Jews and Gentiles! “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” And how accessible to all, whether Jews or Gentiles! “For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”

How striking is St Paul’s reasoning with Israel, quoting from Moses their law-giver, and Isaiah their prophet, with an intimation that the blessing of the gospel would come freely to us Gentiles!

The last verse of this chapter would lead us to despair about the Jews, were it not for the next chapter, which opens so bright a prospect for them.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

## CHAPTER XI.

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild

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olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches : but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness ; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in : for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree ; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree ? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief ; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RE-ENGRAFTING OF THE JEWS, AND THE DIFFUSION OF TRUE RELIGION.

ST PAUL now closes the prophetical part of the epistle in a very remarkable manner, by showing that the rejection of the Jews is at no time *total* as to individuals, nor will be *final* as to the nation.

Not *total*, for the apostle himself was a remarkable instance to the contrary, and in his day there was "a remnant" consisting (it appears, from Acts xxi. 20) of "many thousands," or, as the word actually means, myriads, or tens of thousands, according to the election of grace.

Not *final*, for St Paul plainly declares that the conversion of the Jews nationally was both *practicable* (verse 23) and *probable*, for they are the natural branches, (verse 21,) descendants of the patriarchs to whom the national covenant of Abrahamic grace was revealed.

And not only practicable and probable, but it was

also *certain*, (verse 26.) This likewise, in its consequences, would be a universal blessing. "For if the casting away of them" occasioned the preaching of the gospel for "the reconciling of the world," what shall the receiving of them be but "life from the dead?" And how admirably qualified then must converted Jews be to declare the glad tidings to the rest of the world!

*In the meantime, efforts were to be made for the conversion of the Jews;* St Paul himself used all means that he might save some: to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the law, as under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law. He prayed for them, preached to them, and laboured and suffered on their behalf.

It is not only through the mercy of God shown to the Gentiles, while still in idolatry, but also through the merciful spirit of the Gentiles themselves, following St Paul's example, ("that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy,") that the conversion of individual Jews is to be brought about; but it would appear that their conversion as a nation is to be effected by a manifestation of Messiah himself, (Zech. xii. 10.)

Is it possible for any Christian possessed of com-

mon-sense to read these last two chapters (10th and 11th) without seeing it to be the bounden duty of Christians to support missions both to the Jews and Gentiles?

I confess I cannot but think that, if admitted into the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I should feel somewhat ashamed of having done nothing for the benefit of their descendants.

This chapter makes a very special appeal to the ministers and members of the Church of Rome, for—

*First*, It declares that she was not the original or mother Church, but a wild olive grafted in, (verse 17.)

*Second*, That she was not necessarily the Church that must stand till the close, and against whom the gates of hell could not prevail, (Matt. xvi. 18,) but, on the contrary, that if she abode not in the goodness displayed in the gospel, she would actually be broken off, (verse 22.)

*Third*, She is therefore admonished, as she could only stand by faith, not to “be high minded, but fear,” (ver. 20,) and “not to be wise in her own conceit,” (ver. 25.)

*Fourth*, Nor was she to boast against the branches, the Jews; for their fall, as a nation, (inasmuch as

they had been up to that time the true professing Church of God,) would be but a type of hers.

Happy would it have been for the Church of Rome if she had attended to these monitions.

The chapter closes with an outburst of admiration at these wonderful dispensations towards Jews and Gentiles, in which were displayed "the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," as well in the great salvation provided, as in the time and method of making it known, (ver. 33.) For "of Him," as the Author, and "through Him," as the Dispenser, and "to Him," as the End, "are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

This terminates the *prophetical* part of the Epistle.

NOTE.—"The first eleven chapters of the Romans, regarded intellectually, are the highest triumph of human reasoning."—COLERIDGE.

Archbishop Sumner, in his beautiful and instructive work on the Epistles, so admirably adapted to domestic circumstances, notices in his preface to the Epistle to the Romans, that "the doctrine of justification by faith is often misrepresented, often misconceived, yet it is in fact the basis of the gospel revelation; and the question whether we are justified by faith, or no, is in reality the question, whether we have, or have not, a personal interest in the covenant of the gospel. For by faith alone can that interest be obtained." The preface is remarkably lucid, and well calculated to dispel all doubts and difficulties about the doctrine of justification by faith.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER XII.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward



another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BELIEVER'S REASONABLE SERVICE.

CHRISTIANITY is a religion of principle and of practice. Duty and privilege are connected.

Nor can more powerful motives to duty be suggested, or more explicit rules for practice be laid down, than those we find in Holy Scripture, while false systems of religion fail in both.

Therefore, if by true Christianity God may be glorified, our fellow-sinners benefited, and our own souls made to flourish, then is Christianity indeed a most *reasonable* service.

It will form a dreadful ingredient in the misery of a future state, when the thoughtless, impenitent, and unbelieving shall have discovered, that the great enemy has led them in a most *irrational* path.

St Paul, in the preceding chapters, has been enlarging on the mercies of God in the great work of salvation, and appeals to them as containing sufficient mo-

tives to engage men in the service of God. It will not then be like the offering of a dead animal, but the living service of a rational being, acceptable to God. Animated by these motives, we shall not be conformed to a world lying in thoughtlessness and wickedness, for we cannot serve both "God and mammon;" but shall find our pleasure in following the good and acceptable will of God, who has first "so loved us." In this path we shall cultivate humility, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of gifts and grace; and thus each member will contribute to the benefit of the whole body, (ver. 4-8.)

In this spirit of love, we shall learn to "abhor that which is evil, and cleave [or be glued] to that which is good."

"Prophesying" in those days was a word that included *teaching*, and what we call *preaching*.

"And ministry—let us wait on our ministering;" referred to the deacons' office to minister to the poor.

In order to practise the precept in the 10th verse, it is necessary to have the unselfish spirit of true religion. What a beautiful example we have of this, in the conduct of Abraham towards Lot, in allowing him to make the first choice of the land wherein he would dwell!

To be convinced that this powerful practical religion

would not interfere with the proper discharge of the duties of life, you have only to read the 11th verse.

To "rejoice in hope," is the way to be "patient in tribulation;" and "to continue instant in prayer" for all the blessings we desire for ourselves, or would give to others, enlarges the human heart, so that it is given "to distributing to the necessities of the saints and to hospitality." And not only does it bring us into sympathy with the saints, but also brings, though at an infinite distance, the Christian's character into some conformity with his Divine Master's, in the spirit of blessing them that persecute him, and never cursing even enemies. This is the true spirit of Christianity.

The apostle carries out this principle so far as to say that, whatever be our own circumstances, we ought to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Nor should the little matter of differences in judgment prevent the exercise of this spirit of love in the heart, (ver. 16.) All are dependent one on another, so that "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you," (1 Cor. xii. 21.) Oh! what a spirit of universal benevolence should Christianity produce!

The apostle admits the difficulty, by saying, "If it

be possible," &c., (ver. 18.) If it be in your power, therefore, show kindness even to an avowed enemy.

The figure employed in the 20th verse is supposed to be taken from a most horrible punishment, that of heaping coals of fire on the head.\*

But it is a matter of fact, that a man of any generosity of mind does feel much pain when a person whom he has injured shows him a kindness, and frequently a friendship has thus been formed.

He is the greatest conqueror who overcomes evil with good.

Such was our blessed Lord, who did good to them that hated Him, and prayed for those who spitefully used Him and persecuted Him, and thus in deed and truth overcame evil with good.

Let the precepts contained in this chapter alone be compared with the wisest sayings of any of the ancient philosophers, and common-sense must decide in favour of Christianity, not only as enforcing the purest morals on the different members of society, but also as urging obedience to them by the most powerful motives.

\* The Religious Tract Society has a remarkable tract on this subject, entitled "The man who killed his neighbour."

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### 、 CHAPTER XIII.

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep : for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the

day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying : but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE BELIEVER'S PUBLIC DUTIES, AND PERSONAL HOLINESS.

CHRISTIANITY is a system that never could have been invented by an impostor, for it is a system entirely conducive to the glory of God, and perfective of the happiness of man.

There is no religion in the world that supplies such motives for obedience to lawful authorities, for it alleges, as the highest of all motives, "They are ordained of God," that is, the offices are ordained of Him, and *therefore* must be respected even though they should be held by wicked men.

I was surprised some time ago, when reading a book by a sensible and a good man, to find that he doubted whether the Bible taught either patriotism or private friendship. My answer to the former is the beginning of this chapter, and to the latter the histories of Peter, James, and John, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.



Whether for personal holiness or for public usefulness there is no guide equal to the Holy Scriptures.

Mr Simeon's views of Christianity in this, and other respects, are singularly comprehensive.

He says, "It humbles man as a sinner, it exalts Christ as the Saviour, and it promotes holiness."

In the first five verses, while a plain hint is given to the rulers, a plain duty is enforced on the people. It is rather remarkable that while Paul and Peter, the professed chosen apostles of the Church of Rome, enforce obedience to civil magistrates, that that Church has long endeavoured to bring civil magistrates into subjection to her, that her will may be carried out by their power against all who should oppose her views.

The 6th and 7th verses make it perfectly clear that tribute, custom, and honour are to be paid by Christian men wherever they are due.

How beautifully was the wisdom of our Saviour displayed when the Jews sought to catch Him in His words and to tempt Him to say that it was wrong to pay tribute to a heathen governor !

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," (see Luke xx. 21-26 ; Matt. xvii. 24-27.)

How is it possible for an unprejudiced mind, exercis-

ing common sense, to read the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses without at once perceiving that Christianity adopts the moral law as a Christian man's rule of life under the gospel?

For what does the law of God demand but love to God and love to man?

The very nature of God must change before this law can be changed. It is a transcript of the Divine mind and the reflection of the Divine character.

"God is love."

Happily for us who have transgressed this law, a righteousness adequate to its demands has been provided in the Redeemer, as well as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for sin. This magnifies the law even more than if *we* could have yielded a complete obedience to it, while it opens the door to mercy, grace, and glory, and this gospel actually restores the believer to the spirit of love, for "faith worketh by love."

It is a Divine righteousness, it is an all-sufficient atonement. (Rom. x. 4.)

Singular, yet forcible, calling immediate attention to the subject, is the apostle's statement.

Under the law, and while ignorant of the gospel, we were in a state of moral sleep, indeed, in a state of moral death; but from the time that we have faith

in Christ the night of ignorance and darkness (in every moral sense of the word) is far spent, and the blessed day of faith and hope and love and joy is *at hand*.

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” And, “seeing that we look for such things,” let us “be diligent to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

How striking is the thought that the present state may be compared to night, which soon passeth away; while the future state is revealed to us as an everlasting day, for “there shall be no night there!” The day will dawn when the sun arises, in other words, when the Lord Jesus shall appear in glory. Thus, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” for “unto you that fear his name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” This is the joyful hope for which the Church of Christ should always stand waiting and watching.

St Paul applies this subject practically in the 12th and 13th verses, and, as his manner was, brings the

Redeemer forward as the great Exemplar in sanctification, having previously proved that He is the only meritorious cause of our justification.

Therefore, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," in verse 14, does not mean for justification, that being already clearly proved to have been accomplished for us, but for sanctification, or, in other words, that we may imitate His example, in humility, meekness, resignation, self-denial, and zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the children of men.

Thus He is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER XIV.

“ Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herba. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. I know, and

am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself : but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of : for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure ; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith ? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith : for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DUTY OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE.

IN this chapter are enforced the finer feelings of Christian morality.

It enjoins great forbearance, for the strong are required to bear with the infirmities of their brethren, and not to condemn the weak ; and the weak were not hastily to judge the strong, for each was endeavouring to follow the light of his conscience, (of which God approves, as we read in verse 3,) and therefore was to be respected ; though doubtless every man should seek to have his conscience as much enlightened as possible.

St Paul gives this remarkable reason why we should refrain from judging our weak brother, "for God is able to make him stand." Take heed, then, how you despise him, or any of the little ones.

Among the Jewish and Gentile converts there was much diversity of opinion regarding the observance



of the ceremonial law. When some of the Jewish Christians insisted that attention to the Levitical ceremonies was essential to justification, St Paul would not give place to them "by subjection, no not for an hour;" but when they were regarded only as national peculiarities, then to the weak, St Paul himself became "as weak, that he might gain the weak."

Happily the Gentiles had no burdensome ceremonies imposed upon them, for which exemption they were called to thankfulness; but this did not justify their despising their weaker brethren, and therefore the apostle reproves them.

Our obligation with regard to this duty of mutual forbearance, as well, indeed, as our obedience to every other precept, is founded on the double tie of creation and redemption. We are in no sense our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore are bound to glorify God in our body and spirit which are His. This is the true spirit of Christianity. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's," (ver. 7, 8.)

I am apt to infer from the 9th verse, that we scarcely make sufficient use of the delightful truth, that Christ not only died for our sins, and rose again for our jus-

tification, but also that His revived life is still employed in the same design of love towards us.

St Paul is so anxious to enforce this duty of mutual forbearance, as to appeal to that most solemn truth of Scripture, that we must all stand "before the judgment-seat of Christ," when every one shall give account of himself to God. It is well when we can view principles and practice in the light of that Day.

To lay a stumbling-block in the way of a weaker brother has, in its own nature, a direct tendency to destroy him for whom Christ died.

Righteousness, and peace, and joy, are the characteristics of Christ's kingdom, and should be the aim of all Christians. By striving after these things we serve Christ, are approved of God, and acceptable to all right-thinking men.

In the close of the chapter St Paul is still carrying on the subject of following conscience. If a man doubts the lawfulness of what he does, he is self-condemned; this is the meaning of the words, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

When we look at the true spirit of Christianity, as applicable to all time and all circumstances, can we wonder that one of the ancients, on taking up the New Testament, said, "Either this is not Christianity, or we are not Christians?"



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER XV.

“ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy

Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

## CHAPTER XV.

### FORBEARANCE ENFORCED BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

THE apostle is still treating of mutual forbearance, but, whatever subject he enforces, whether it be justification, or sanctification, or consolation, his blessed Redeemer is never out of his mind, and here He is introduced on the subject of self-denial. Self-pleasing is a grand object with our fallen nature, but Christianity teaches us "to please others for their good to edification," even as "Christ pleased not Himself," but submitted to the greatest indignities and cruelties, that God might be honoured, and that man might be saved.

The quotation immediately after, from Ps. xviii., with the many other quotations from the Psalms and different parts of the Old Testament, all show the intimate connexion existing between the Old and the New Testaments, for the latter shows the fulfilment and accomplishment of the promises and prophecies

made in the former. He who gives up the Old Testament gives up the New, and he gives up at the same time all solid hope of eternal life, for they both testify of Christ as an Incarnate Saviour, suffering, sympathising, returning, conquering, reigning, and finally triumphing over evil. Mark the fourth verse in this point of view.

It is most instructive, and consolatory to notice the titles which our gracious God takes to Himself in Holy Scripture. (See verses 5, 13, 33.)

To conciliate the believing Jews, St Paul admits that Jesus Christ, at His first advent, was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers, but he proves from their own Scriptures that this was not the whole of His mission, but that the Gentiles also should "glorify God for His mercy," and that this would be a subject for general thanksgiving and praise; for when, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "the root of Jesse should rise to reign over the Gentiles," then true religion would prevail in our world. And we sinners of the Gentiles may claim the promise, "In Him shall the Gentiles *hope*," and look to Him as the God of *hope*, to "fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost."

The wisdom of our apostle is manifest in acknow-

ledging anything that was right in those whom he would reprove, while at the same time he took pains to defend his apostolic authority, in order that his inspired advice might be followed, (verses 14-22.) It was the blessed Master's plan, as shown in His addresses to the seven churches of Asia, (Rev. ii., iii.)

The apostle uses a forcible argument to impress upon the Gentile Christians the duty of making a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem, for since the Gentiles, he says, had been made partakers of their spiritual things, it was doubtless their duty to minister unto them in carnal things, indeed, it was but as the payment of a debt. It is to be feared that the subject of a cheerful and liberal distribution of alms is not sufficiently considered by wealthy Christians. It would be well if all such would look the following passage fairly in the face, remembering that it is the Word of God. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," (1 Tim. vi. 17-19.)



Perpetually does this holy man entreat other Christians to unite with him in prayer, because God only could give effect to any labours, (verses 30th and 31st.)

His loving heart was greatly refreshed by the communion of saints, and again he looks up to God, as the God of peace, to be with them all. Amen.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

### CHAPTER XVI.

" I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea ; that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you : for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus ; (who have for my life laid down their own necks : unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles :) Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persia, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and

avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SALUTATIONS, PRAYERS, AND PRAISES OF AN APOSTLE.

THE Christian brethren and sisters in Rome were of different talents, activity, and usefulness, and St Paul notices and signalises them accordingly.

Of a truth, it may be said of these happy believers that their names are in the Book of Life.

In the wisdom of providence there are various ranks in society, but all may contribute to the good of the whole—(1 Cor. xii. 14, &c.)—all are equally important in their station.

With respect to women, Christianity has bestowed upon them peculiar privileges, having exalted them to the highest honour, by employing them in spreading the glorious gospel; whereas all false religions have degraded them.

In this last chapter, on which we are entering, St Paul shows his high respect for these Christian women, and is directed by the Spirit of God to com-

mend those who had excelled in the Church at Rome.

Phœbe appears to have been a person of considerable influence, inasmuch as she had it in her power to be "a succourer of many," and even of the apostle himself.

Priscilla, and Aquila her husband, would even be willing martyrs to save the apostle's life; to them he gives personal thanks, and the churches of the Gentiles united with him.

Mary, also, with Persis, laboured *much* in the Lord.

This may give us an idea of the notice which will be taken of the lives of particular Christians in the day of judgment; we should pray that God would give us grace, according to our stations, to follow their examples, and also to feel thankful for the many Christian sisters in the present day who are so doing.

Oh, what mutual honour and love there were amongst all the Churches of Christ! but, alas! the busy enemy soon introduced tares among the wheat, persons who "by good words and fair speeches" deceived the hearts of the simple, and occasioned unnecessary divisions. How important is prayer for wisdom!

And now the apostle, before he closes this Epistle,

gives them a view of the final victory, assuring them that the "God of peace would bruise Satan under their feet shortly;" and this necessarily leads us to take a brief view of that great enemy, and of his evil works.

We read that many angels "left their first estate," and one is particularly mentioned as their leader; and at the opening of Scripture, the fall of our first parents is attributed to the subtle suggestions of that great adversary of God and man; and the assurance given that he shall be finally overcome. (Gen. iii. 15; 1 John iii. 2.)

Though there is little said, comparatively, in the Old Testament, yet in the New Testament the subject is fully entered into, because the great Conqueror had then appeared, who first overcame him personally, and thereby laid a sure foundation for the final victory of all believers. Hence our Lord says that Satan is judged, and condemned, and cast out already.

It has been said that the great leading temptations, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, were contained in the first temptation. The tree was pleasant to the eyes and good for food; moreover, the enemy suggested that there was a virtue in it that would aid their understanding, and enable them to think for themselves.

It is remarkable that, when the enemy contended

with our blessed Lord in His human nature, the suggestions he made seem to imply, *distrust* of the Father's paternal care, *presumption*, by an abuse of the promise made for His preservation, and *ambition* in proposing that the dominion of the whole world should be given to Him without His sustaining any previous sufferings. Peter fell into this snare when he would have dissuaded our Lord from submitting to sufferings. (Matt. xvi. 22.)

We are ready to believe that this was one of the most subtle temptations, because it was our Lord's own authorised hope that this world, by redemption, would become His.

It is surely worthy of notice that our Lord employed no other weapon than the Holy Scriptures in repelling the temptations of Satan. The sword of the Spirit is a weapon which Satan cannot withstand. Resist him with this, "and he will flee from you," yea, and with terror,—according to a remarkable expression in St James' Epistle, (iv. 7,) like a person who finds a house inhabited by one that is too strong for him.

Amongst us, the temptations are various; neglect of the Scriptures, of the Sabbath, and of the appointed means of grace, or, on the other hand, a reliance on forms and ceremonies, with the heart unaffected and the life unchanged.

Hence, self-righteousness, formality, and hypocrisy itself, and even among true believers, unnecessary divisions, heart-burnings, and a party spirit.

The danger is extreme when Satan comes in the form of an angel of light. The simplicity of true Christianity is a guard against this, simplicity of dependence on Christ alone for acceptance, and simplicity of devotedness to His service, "for there is salvation in none other," and "one is your master, even Christ," (2 Cor. xi. 3.)

But who can point out the various forms of temptation arising from our constitution, our peculiarities, or the circumstances in which we may be placed? It is true that it hath pleased God to provide an armour for us, as described in Ephesians vi., which should be continually before our minds. He who will not pray to God for His Holy Spirit to enlighten and direct him, and neglects or ridicules the idea of the presence of an evil spirit, (for though generally their leader Satan is named, there are a multitude of evil spirits besides,) is caught in the snare.

But the true believers at Rome, humble, watchful, prayerful, had no cause for fear, for the God of peace, they were assured, would "bruise Satan under their feet shortly."

These are the glad tidings brought to us by the



gospel of Christ, that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," (1 John iii. 8,) finally subduing, and leaving no more place for him in this renewed kingdom. Till then the enemy will be perpetually endeavouring to gain advantage. But rejoice, ye servants of Christ, for "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

As his manner was, the apostle looks to the power of God to establish believers according to this gospel, which happily was to be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; and when we consider what a remarkably comprehensive view this epistle gives of Christianity, as to doctrine, prophecy, practice, and experience, and of the revealed plans of the Almighty and His mode of carrying them out, we must heartily join with the apostle in adding,—

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

NOTE.—Dr Chalmers's eloquent and forcible lectures on this epistle, are a very valuable gift to the Christian Church. I do not see how conscience and common-sense can resist the powerful appeal with which he beautifully sets forth the freeness of justification by faith in Christ, and the blessed effects thereof.

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